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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to enable a comparison to be made of prekindergarten and kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers' perceptions of work-related problems. In the first phase of the study, copies of an inventory entitled "My Biggest Problem Today" were sent to both national and state (Wisconsin) samples of prekindergarten programs. The problem inventory asked personnel to describe, on each of 10 working days, the problem that caused them the most concern or difficulty. Synthesis of the problem accounts resulted in 102 unique problem statements, which were subsequently used to construct a Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist. In the seond phase of the study, checklists were sent to other Wisconsin and national samples. Factor analysis of checklist responses identified seven problem areas: subordinate staff relations, control and nurturance of children, remediation, relations with supervisors, parent cooperation, management of time, and management of routine. Comparison of findings with research on kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers' problems suggested four areas of difference: Prekindergarten teachers express important unmet needs with respect to (1) supervision of subordinate staff, (2) relations with parents regarding compliance with program policies and procedures, (3) relations with supervisors, and (4) management of routines. Implications of the findings for early childhood teacher education are indicated. (RH)

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Problems of Prekindergarten Teachers: A Basis for Examining Teacher Education Practices

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Problems of Prekindergarten Teachers: A Basis for Examining Teacher Education Practices

Certain early childhood educators have recently expressed concern about whether or not early childhood teacher preparation programs are meeting the needs of prekindergarten teachers (Peters & Kostelnik, 1981; Verzaro, 1980; Warnat, 1980). (The term prekindergarten is used here to refer to early childhood programs serving children from birth until entrance into public schools, in full- and half-day programs such as nursery school, preschool and group child care.) These concerns stem, in part, from beliefs that there are important differences between teaching in prekindergarten settings and teaching in K-12 school settings. Prekindergarten and K-12 work settings have different characteristics; prekindergarten and K-12 teacher work tasks and responsibilities may be different; and the daily work-related problems faced by prekindergarten teachers may differ from those of their K-12 counterparts. Behind these concerns nags the question: Are early childhood teacher education programs adequately taking these differences into account?

On the surface it appears to be a simple question to resolve. A comparison of the work of teaching in prekindergarten settings and teaching in K-12 settings would reveal differences. Teacher preparation institutions could then

be surveyed to determine how their programs and practices relate to those differences. If necessary, program modifications could be made. However, as is often the case in our profession, the matter is not as simple as it first appears. Before the question of teacher preparation programs can be resolved, a comparison is necessary. Such a comparison requires two sets of knowledge: one about K-12 settings and teaching; the other about prekindergarten settings and teaching.

On the one hand, considerable reliable knowledge exists about K-12 teaching and K-12 schools. Knowledge validated by two hundred years of school practice and research on teaching and the preparation of teachers provides a rich source of understanding about American schools and teaching in those schools. Based on this knowledge, the following important features of K-12 schools and teaching can be characterized as being highly similar and stable across settings: curriculum, attendance patterns, grouping practices, roles and responsibilities of school personnel, funding practices, structure and organization, and working conditions of teachers.

Given the general similarity among K-12 school settings and the work of teaching in K-12 settings, it is not surprising that there exists reliable knowledge that K-12 teachers face similar work-related problems as they go about their daily responsibilities. Based on a series of teacher problem studies undertaken in a variety of K-12 settings, Cruickshank (1980a)

reports that teacher problems can be grouped and defined in terms of five relatively stable areas:

1. Affiliation. The need to establish and maintain good relationships with others in the school, both pupils and staff.

2. Control. The need to have pupils behavior appropriately.

3. Parent relationships and home conditions. The need to relate and work well with adults outside the school who are important in the lives of children and the need to understand home conditions.

4. Student success. The need to have students be successful academically and socially.

5. Time. The need to be effective managers of our personal and professional lives. (pp. 31-32)

In summary, Cruickshank (1981) writes:

> Across the studies, the problems teachers report are relatively stable. Elementary and secondary teachers, and teachers of the rural disadvantaged--all have problems that are more alike than different. They differ only slightly in their perceptions of the frequency and severity of the problem. (p. 402)

On the other hand, there is considerably less validated knowledge about the nature of teaching in prekindergarten settings. Much of what is known about prekindergarten education is based on the best judgments and opinions of scholars in the field and on the collective experience and conventional wisdom shared among thousands of prekindergarten education practitioners. These opinions or common understandings may be valid or accurate. In general, however, the validity or accuracy of the knowledge upon which we base prekindergarten practice, and the preparation of prekindergarten teachers, has

not been established in a scientific sense. Decisions and practices based on such unvalidated knowledge may be sound or they may be faulty. In many cases, therefore, we simply don't know whether if our programs and practices are the most appropriate.

A summary of the conventional wisdom suggests that similarities in the work and work setting of prekindergarten teachers can be characterized as including primary responsibility for curriculum development; attraction, retention and intake of clients; selection, training, supervision and evaluation of subordinate staff; working within a variable budget based on client tuition payments; frequent and often intense interaction with parents; and planning and managing a program based on constantly varying, unpredictable numbers of children. Prekindergarten teachers work in settings which lack traditional, organizational, and legal procedures. Their job descriptions and work responsibilities tend to be vague and broadly defined. Work contracts are often vague, and non-negotiable. These features, common in nursery, child care, or full- or half-day prekindergarten programs, differ from those normally found in K-12 schools.

Given these apparent differences between prekindergarten settings and teaching and K-12 settings and teaching, one could assume that there would be corresponding differences between the daily work-related problems encountered by prekindergarten

teachers and their K-12 counterparts. Here again, our professional knowledge of the problems perceived by prekindergarten teachers is based primarily upon the opinion of scholars and the common knowledge of prekindergarten practitioners. This also means that the teacher preparation programs which are designed to prepare teachers to solve their daily problems are, similarly, based on informed opinion and professional experience, not on research (Peters & Kostelnik, 1981).

Investigating Prekindergarten Teacher Problems

I undertook a study to test the assumption that there are meaningful differences between the work of prekindergarten teachers and K-12 teachers. The question guiding the study is, Do meaningful differences exist between the work-related problems perceived by prekindergarten and K-12 teachers? The study was designed to identify and validate the work-related problems perceived by prekindergarten teachers. In this study a problem is considered to be an instance of goal interference. "A problem is an expression of an unmet need or an unfulfilled goal. A problem arises when we want something and cannot have it" (Cruickshank, 1980b, p. 9).

Specifically, the research reported here was designed to answer three main questions: (a) What work-related problems occur most frequently for prekindergarten teachers? (b) What work-related problems are most bothersome? (c) What global

problem areas can be inferred from prekindergarten teachers' perceptions of their work-related problems? Answers to these three questions will contribute to our understanding of teaching in prekindergarten settings; will provide a basis for comparison between problems encountered by prekindergarten teachers and K-12 teachers; and, if changes in early childhood teacher preparation curriculum are indicated following further research, will give direction to those changes.

Research Methodology

The study was designed in two parts. Although teacher problems could have been identified in many different ways, in this study it was assumed that a problem exists only in the eyes of the beholder. Therefore, rather than asking supervisors, administrators or teacher trainers to name teacher problems, the first part of this research asked prekindergarten assistant teachers, teachers, and teacher/administrators to report their own work-related problems. To accomplish this, 200 programs were randomly selected from a list of all prekindergarten programs licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services. Similarly, 200 prekindergarten programs were randomly selected from the membership of the National Coalition for Campus Child Care. Three packets were mailed to each of the 400 centers. Each packet contained a cover letter inviting participation in the study and giving instructions, and ten copies of the My Biggest Problem Today Inventory (Cruickshank &

Myers, 1976). The problem inventory asked teachers for each of ten working days to describe the critical incident or problem that caused them the most concern or difficulty. An example of a problem reported by one prekindergarten teacher follows.

> Out of approximately 10 children in the room, when clean up time comes around, there always seems to be two or three children who don't cooperate. On Friday, one boy wouldn't help (and he hasn't been cooperative lately), so he was given a time out. After that he helped; however, that isn't always true for him. Another child didn't help and we just talked to her one-on-one and that was sufficient. That doesn't work with her always either. It seems as though if one child continues to play or starts to pick up and then gets sidetracked and plays, then a few other children do the same. Sometimes it's the same children day after day with this problem and, as can be expected, others have their off days and don't want to cooperate.

In the first part of the study, 57 Wisconsin teachers returned 368 problem accounts. From the national sample 466 problem descriptions were turned in by 68 teachers.

The raw problem descriptions, such as the example above, were each read individually by a jury consisting of the investigator, a director of a campus-based child care program, a head teacher in a campus-based program, and a teacher/director of a private child care center. We examined each problem description, eliminated obvious duplicates and, then, by consensus, synthesized each problem description into a brief statement about which of the teacher's goals was being interfered with. In the problem reported above, it might be inferred that the teacher's goal was to get children to clean up when they were asked. Since something was interfering with this

goal, we can say that this teacher had a problem "getting children to clean up when they are asked."

Synthesis of the 852 problem descriptions reported by teachers resulted in 102 unique problem statements. These statements were used to construct the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist. This checklist asked teachers to consider each problem statement and to rate how frequently each problem occurred for them and how bothersome that problem was for them when it occurred. An example of five specific problems that appeared in the Prekindergarten Teacher Problem Checklist is provided in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The second part of the study was designed to verify the teacher problems identified in the first part of the study. To do this, an additional 400 programs were randomly selected from the two groups described earlier. A cover letter inviting participation and giving instructions and three copies of the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist were sent to each of the 400 centers. One hundred sixty-seven usable checklists were returned by the Wisconsin sample, and 124 were returned by the national sample representing 23 states.

In sum, for each of the 102 problems on the checklist, the 291 respondents in the second part of the study provided

information about how frequently the problems occurred and the extent to which the problems bothered them when they did occur. From the checklist responses we could then determine if a problem was (a) frequent, (b) bothersome, (c) both frequent and bothersome, or (d) neither frequent nor bothersome. Computer analysis has provided information about which problems occurred with significant frequency and were significantly bothersome; and an analysis of global problem areas.

Frequent and Bothersome Problems

Two major goals of this study were to identify those work-related problems which prekindergarten teachers report occur most frequently and to identify those problems which prekindergarten teachers felt were more bothersome when they did occur. Initially, checklist responses of the Wisconsin and national sample were analyzed separately, but since few differences were observed, the data were combined and reanalyzed. Application of the binomial test procedure revealed that of the 102 problems which comprise the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist, 34 percent were found to be either significantly frequently occurring, significantly bothersome, or both. Table 1 indicates the 20 problems which were found to occur with significant frequency and the 26 problems which were identified as being significantly bothersome when they did occur. Of particular importance to prekindergarten teachers are the 11 problems which are indicated as being both significantly frequent and bothersome.

Insert Table 1 about here

The third goal of this study was to determine if there were global problem areas that could be inferred from prekindergarten teachers' perceptions of the problems. The problems were grouped by subjecting the checklist responses to factor analysis procedures. When this was done the problems fell into seven broad areas: (a) subordinate staff relations, (b) control and nurturance of children, (c) remediation, (d) relations with supervisor, (e) parent cooperation, (f) management of time, and (g) management of routines. Each broad problem area is described below in terms of the specific problems which comprise that area. Description of each problem area will be followed by a brief discussion. This article will conclude with a comparison of prekindergarten and K-12 teacher problems followed by a discussion of the implications of this research for prekindergarten early childhood teacher education.

Subordinate Staff Relations

Prekindergarten teachers report more problems related to the supervision of subordinate staff than any other problem area. Clusters or sets of subordinate staff related problems are apparent. One such cluster centers around getting subordinate staff members to do what they are expected. Prekindergarten teachers report problems such as getting staff

to follow through on assigned responsibilities; getting staff to be on time for their shifts; and getting staff to recognize and act on children's needs in an appropriate fashion. Prekindergarten teachers want to provide for communications among their staff, and report problems getting staff to work in a cooperative fashion. In another set of problems, teachers want to be effective in recruiting, training, directing, evaluating and providing feedback to their staff. They report problems finding time to adequately supervise staff, particularly when they are responsible for children. Teachers report difficulty finding qualified staff, orienting new staff to all aspects of their job and providing evaluation and feedback to their staff.

Subordinate staff relations problems appear to have no direct counterpart with problems perceived by K-12 teachers. One reason why this problem area is unique to prekindergarten teachers is that the usual staffing pattern in K-12 settings is to assign only one teacher to each group of pupils. Such is not the case in prekindergarten settings. Attention to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive developmental needs of young children is labor intensive. For example, the accepted staff-child ratio for children birth to 30 months varies from between 1:2 to 1:5. Thus, a teacher responsible for developmental care of 12 infants or toddlers would also be responsible for at least 2-5 subordinate staff. Even with four

and five year olds, it is not uncommon to have one or more assistant teachers, particularly in full-day child care programs. Therefore, while K-12 teachers normally work in isolation from other adults and are responsible only for the learning and management of a group of pupils, prekindergarten teachers typically are responsible for a wide range of subordinate staff responsibilities and, at the same time, are responsible for the care and development of a group of young children.

Control and Nurturance of Children

A second major problems area reflects two seemingly contradictory and unrelated sets of problems. First, teachers report control problems, those concerns related to getting children to do what the teacher asks them to do. The second part of this global problem area are those problems of helping children resolve personal concerns at the program site. Teacher problems of this sort have been defined in relation to the goal of nurturing (Cruickshank, Kennedy & Myers, 1974).

Prekindergarten teachers report control problems such as getting children to learn and follow room rules and routines; getting children to participate and pay attention during group time; getting them to clean up when asked; and getting them to share or take turns. Teachers also report difficulty understanding and knowing how to respond positively to the frequencly aggressive behvior of young children.

Nurturance problems are related to the goal of helping children resolve concerns which impair complete and secure participation in the center's program. Prekindergarten teachers report nurturance problems such as involving the passive child in activities; helping new children adjust to the program; helping children deal with their fears and fantasies; and helping children become less dependent upon adults.

It is clear that like their K-12 counterparts, prekindergarten teachers have a need for the children they are teaching to behave appropriately. The relationship between nurturance problems and control problems is not as clear. One possible explanation is that the teachers' goal of helping children solve their problems, while beneficial to the child, also reflects teacher behavior which Suransky (1982) has described as oriented toward obtaining increased conformity and obedience from the child. Thus it appears that solving these nurturance problems might also result in teachers feeling like they had greater control.

Remediation

This problem area is defined by teachers' general goal of improving the quality of children's lives by improving conditions in and out of school (Cruickshank, Kennedy & Myers, 1974). The relative importance of remediation problems for prekindergarten teachers is apparent in that 60 percent of the problems which define this problem area are also significantly

bothersome problems. Teachers report remediation problems such as knowing how to help the special or atypical child; helping parents of special or atypical children recognize and adjust to their child's needs; and helping parents understand and deal appropriately with their child's behavior. Prekindergarten teachers want to protect children and report problems knowing how to counteract a child's negative home environment; and knowing if parents are abusing or neglecting their children. They report problems getting parent cooperation in solving their children's center-related problems. Teachers are also concerned about their own ability to meet the individual child's needs in the group setting without neglecting the group, particularly in the case of a child with special educational needs.

The relative importance of remediation problems for prekindergarten teachers may be explained by the developmental requirements incumbant upon teachers of young children. K-12 teachers are primarily concerned with developing the cognitive or academic abilities of their pupils. In addition to cognitive development, prekindergarten teachers are faced with more developmentally immediate concerns for physical and socio-emotional development. Moreover, the relationships among the family unit, the developing young child and the prekindergarten teacher are more central to prekindergarten teachers' work and demands than to K-12 teachers' work. As discussed later, the nature of prekindergarten teacher relations

with parents are more frequent and qualitatively different than for K-12 teachers.

Relations with Supervisor

The most consistent problem area reported by prekindergarten teachers was relations with their supervisor. Prekindergarten teachers report problems getting their supervisor to treat them fairly, respect their professional judgement, and in getting their supervisor to include them in the decision-making process for their classrooms. They also report problems getting their supervisor to give them program guidelines or job expectations, and then to give them feedback about their job performance.

Like their K-12 counterparts, prekindergarten teachers are concerned with establishing and maintaining cooperative and supportive relations with their immediate supervisor. However, prekindergarten teacher problems are different in that they reflect the need for more adequate description of job responsibilities, expectations and feedback about job performance. Such needs are understandable if one accepts the assumption that prekindergarten settings are poorly organized and loosely structured with respect to teachers' job descriptions, work responsibilities and job evaluation.

The generally accepted common knowledge is that in prekindergarten work settings job descriptions may be vague or absent altogether; that actual work responsibilities may be

extensive; and, that program guidelines may be vague or absent. Similarly, it is assumed that in prekindergarten work settings, personnel policies governing probationary requirements, performance evaluation, grievance procedures and the disciplinary process are often poorly defined or nonexistent. In contrast, work conditions of this sort are not characteristic of K-12 school settings and may explain why such problems are infrequently reported or are of little concern to K-12 teachers.

Parent Cooperation

Prekindergarten teachers report problems getting parents to follow program routines and center policies and procedures, such as not bringing a sick child to the center; or dropping off and picking up their children on time. Prekindergarten teachers have problems enlisting parent cooperation with toilet training efforts, and are specifically concerned about dealing with parents who, in order to meet enrollment requirements, say their child is toilet trained when the child is not. Prekindergarten teachers also report problems getting parents to follow procedures and policies with respect to enrollment, fee payment, attendance, and providing required information for files.

This type of problem with parents appears to be unique to prekindergarten teachers. This is understandable since, for example, K-12 teachers generally are not involved in helping pupils become toilet trained. Similarly, when a pupil becomes sick in class, the teacher merely sends the pupil to the office

or to school nurse. The secretary or nurse takes care of the pupil in the office or infirmary and contacts the parents. It is not, however, a responsibility or a matter of immediate concern for the classroom teacher. Likewise, enrollment, attendance and pupil files are controlled by state, local and building policies and procedures. Enforcement of these procedures is the province of various state and local officials, school administrators and secretarial staff, not the classroom teacher. In the public schools, pupils do not pay tuition, thus collecting tuition is not a matter of concern for K-12 teachers.

In contrast, these matters may be problematic for prekindergarten teachers who may be responsible for children during the time they are learning bladder and bowel control. If, as is often the case, prekindergarten teachers work in centers with little or no secretarial staff, or if teachers have regular administrative responsibilities, then getting parents to follow various policies and procedures can be a problem. Likewise, obtaining parental cooperation may be considerably more difficult if policies or procedures are nonexistant, poorly developed, poorly disseminated or, if they pertain to matters not covered by state or local statutory regulations.

The magnitude of these concerns may be exacerbated by the quantity of contacts between prekindergarten teachers and parents. In K-12 classes, under ideal circumstances, teachers may see parents once each grading period, at most about six

times each year. In reality, however, unless problem behavior necessitates parent-teacher conferences, most K-12 teachers may only see a pupil's parents two or three times during the school year, if at all. Prekindergarten teachers usually have face-to-face interactions with a child's parents twice each day, for every day the child attends. This means, for example, that the teacher of a child in full-time attendance for 35 weeks would have 350 face-to-face interactions with that child's parents.

Management of Time

The five problem areas just discussed were defined by both how frequently problems occurred and how bothersome they were when they occurred. However, the management of time problem area emerged only from teachers' perceptions of how bothersome the problems were. In this area, teachers reported problems find time away from children for planning, and finding time for cleaning and other nonteaching tasks. Teachers have difficulty managing their time so they do not spend personal time doing necessary classroom or administrative chores.

The most efficient use of personal and professional time is problematic for both K-12 and prekindergarten teachers. Time management problems may be particularly bothersome for prekindergarten teachers since their jobs are often broadly defined and usually include a wider variety of cleaning and nonteaching tasks, such as training, supervision and evaluation

of subordinate staff, than do their K-12 counterparts. Similarly, preparation time and breaks away from the class are often built into K-12 teacher contracts, a feature not usually found in prekindergarten settings.

Management of Routines

This problem area emerged only from teachers' perceptions of how frequently problems occurred. Teachers have problems being able to enlist the support of parents and directing staff to most effectively manage the many routines of a prekindergarten program. Teachers report problems managing toileting or toilet training routines, rest or nap time, and mealtimes.

That this problem area was found to be associated with teachers' perceptions of how frequently problems occurred is not surprising. A substantial part of the prekindergarten teachers' work responsibilities revolves around regular and frequently occurring routines: morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, rest or nap time, toileting and regular diaper checks. Again, these responsibilities are not normally part of the the work of K-12 teachers.

Comparison of Prekindergarten and K-12 Teacher Problems

We are now in a much better position to answer confidently the question posed at the beginning of the study: Are there important differences between the work-related problems of

prekindergarten and K-12 teachers? Comparison of our research findings with research on K-12 teacher problems suggests four areas of difference. Prekindergarten teachers express important unmet needs with respect to supervision of subordinate staff; relations with parents regarding compliance with program policies and procedures; relations with their supervisors; and management of routines.

There is no evidence that K-12 teachers experience problems supervising subordinate staff. This problem area appears to be unique to the work of teaching in prekindergarten settings. This difference is due to the labor intensive nature of providing developmentally appropriate care for young children. K-12 teachers do report problems with parent relationships. However, the nature of prekindergarten teachers' problems with parents appear to differ substantially from those of their K-12 counterparts. This difference may be the result of fundamental organizational differences between prekindergarten and K-12 settings. K-12 teachers do report some problems establishing and maintaining good relationship with their supervisors, but prekindergarten teacher problems in this area are quite different and more numerous. Again, the nature of prekindergarten work setting appears to be a primary reason for the difference. Finally, management of routines is a frequently occurring problem area for prekindergarten teachers. The nature of these routines and the problems they engender are dependent

upon the developmental level and care requirements of young children and are, for the most part, not present in K-12 settings.

Both prekindergarten and K-12 teachers express the need to have children behave appropriately. They both want their charges to be successful in the program, and want to help children lead happy, healthy lives outside of school. Both groups of teachers want to be effective in their personal and professional relationships with children, parents and other staff. Finally, both prekindergarten and K-12 teachers express the need to be able to control students effectively and to made efficient make use of their personal and professional time.

Implications for Teacher Education

When considering the results of this study and their meaning for prekindergarten teacher preparation programs, four observations can be noted.

First, the four areas of difference between the work-related problems of prekindergarten and K-12 teachers provide a concrete basis for examining current prekindergarten teacher preparation programs. The results of this study provide insight into the actual work requirements in prekindergarten settings. Are teacher preparation programs preparing prospective teachers to meet those requirements? The answer to this question can only be provided by additional research.

Second, the findings from this research provide a basis for examining teacher preparation curricula, in that the specific problems and problem areas are clear and unambiguous. The problems and problem areas reflect specific, concrete real world events in the daily working lives of prekindergarten teachers. The problem areas identified reflect the individual and shared perceptions of two groups of prekindergarten teachers in a variety of prekindergarten settings from 23 states representing virtually all regions of the country. However, this study represents only a beginning in the study of prekindergarten teacher problems. Further investigations of additional populations using revised versions of the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist are necessary.

Third, the findings from this research contribute to our understanding of the nature of prekindergarten teachers' work. The problems identified are anchored in specific details of teachers' work and reflect much of the complexity of the task of teaching in a prekindergarten setting.

Fourth, the results of this research can provide information which is directly useful in making decisions regarding the preservice and inservice preparation needs of prekindergarten teachers. If future research determines that modifications in prekindergarten teacher preparation programs are necessary, the results of this study can provide direction for changes as well as specific curricular content. Peters and

Kostelnik (1981) point out that most prekindergarten preservice and many inservice preparation programs are based on inferred rather than expressed needs; and, that for the most part, such programs are based on expert opinion, not on empirical data. The present study provides empirical data about prekindergarten teachers' expressed needs. Recall that this research is based upon the notion of problem as an instance of a goal held by an individual, a goal which is being interfered with. In other words, a problem exists when an individual has a goal and cannot achieve it. Therefore, the problems identified in this study represent desired goals prekindergarten teachers have already established for themselves. As such, these problems represent a particularly potent source for content and strategies (Kelman, 1971) which are necessary to design meaningful preparation programs for prekindergarten teachers.

Table 8

Significantly Frequent and Bothersome Prekindergarten Teacher Problems

Description of Problem
FREQUENT PROBLEMS
Getting children to share or take turns
Providing for communications among staff
Getting children to clean up
Motivating myself to be involved in outside professional activities
Providing adequate staff to meet all program needs
Providing adequate indoor large muscle play space
Finding workshops that are appropriate to my level of skill and knowledge
Getting my supervisor to give me feedback about my job performance
Dressing and undressing children for winter outdoor play
BOTHERSOME PROBLEMS
Controlling the noise or energy level in the room
Understanding the reason for children's problem behavior
Getting parent cooperation in solving their children's preschool/center related problems
Knowing how to handle children's aggressive behavior
Getting parents to drop off or pick up their children on time
Dealing with a child who cries or whines frequently
Knowing how to help the special or atypical child
Keeping children's attention during group time
Getting parents to provide appropriate clothing from home

(table continues)

"I HAVE A PROBLEM . . ."

FREQUENTLY						BOTHERSOME				
ALWAYS		OCCASIONALLY		NEVER		EXTREMELY		SOMEWHAT		NOT AT ALL
5	4	3	2	1		5	4	3	2	1
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	44. GETTING PARENTS TO RESPECT MY PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR JUDGMENT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	45. KEEPING CHILDREN'S ATTENTION DURING GROUP TIME	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	46. PROVIDING EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK TO STAFF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	47. FINDING APPROPRIATE TEACHING/LEARNING MATERIALS FOR PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	48. GETTING PARENT COOPERATION WITH TOILET TRAINING	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Description of Problem

Feeling positive toward a child who frequently misbehaves

Helping parents understand and deal appropriately with their child's behavior

Knowing how to counteract a child's negative home environment

Meeting the needs of the children when the room is short-staffed

Working with equipment or facilities which are in poor condition

Knowing if parents are abusing or neglecting their children

FREQUENT AND BOTHERSOME PROBLEMS

Getting parents to keep their children home when they are sick

Spending personal time doing necessary classroom or administrative tasks

Understanding the public attitude that day care or preschool is just babysitting

Finding time away from children for planning or preparation

Getting children to use words and not hit others when they are angry

Finding effective substitute staff

Being able to stay home even though I am sick

Keeping one child's behavior from affecting other children

Meeting an individual child's needs without neglecting the group

Getting parents to come to scheduled events or conferences

Finding time for cleaning and other nonteaching tasks

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Figure Caption

Figure 1. Five examples from the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist